

Time for Love

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Recepción: 02-11-2023 / Aceptación: 23-11-2023

Abstract. Alain Badiou offers a distinctive interpretation of time, anchored in his unique metaphysics and philosophy of the event. For Badiou, time is interventional, demarcating a disjunction between two incommensurable sequences of rupture in human history. The concept of disjunction occupies a pivotal role in Badiou's philosophy of both love and time. This paper provides a comprehensive examination of the temporality of love within the context of Badiou's philosophy. We argue that, when viewed through Badiou's philosophical lens, love provides an invaluable vantage point for understanding the very creation and transformation of time. As this chapter progresses, a concise exposition of Badiou's metaphysics and his theory of truth procedure is furnished, emphasizing facets that resonate with his philosophy of love. Time is explored from three vantage points: time between worlds, time within a world, and time as difference-as-such. These distinct conceptions of time, when examined in light of love, provide a fertile ground for further developing his concept of time.

Keywords: Time; Love; Intervention; Duration; Disjunction.

[es] Tiempo para el amor

Resumen. Alain Badiou ofrece una interpretación particular del tiempo, anclada en su singular metafísica y su filosofía del acontecimiento. Para Badiou, el tiempo interviene, delimitando una disyunción entre dos secuencias incommensurables de ruptura en la historia humana. El concepto de disyunción ocupa un lugar central en la filosofía del amor y del tiempo de Badiou. Este artículo ofrece un examen exhaustivo de la temporalidad del amor en el contexto de la filosofía de Badiou. Argumentamos que, visto a través de la lente filosófica de Badiou, el amor proporciona un punto de vista inestimable para comprender la propia creación y transformación del tiempo. A medida que avanza este capítulo, se ofrece una exposición concisa de la metafísica de Badiou y su teoría del procedimiento de la verdad, haciendo hincapié en las facetas que resuenan con su filosofía del amor. El tiempo se explora desde tres puntos de vista: el tiempo entre mundos, el tiempo dentro de un mundo y el tiempo como diferencia en sí. Estas distintas concepciones del tiempo, cuando se examinan a la luz del amor, proporcionan un terreno fértil para seguir desarrollando su concepto del tiempo.

Palabras clave: tiempo; amor; intervención; duración; disyunción.

Sumario. 1. Introduction. 2. Time Between Worlds is Intervention. 3. Time Within a World is Duration. 4. Time is Difference-As-Such. Bibliography.

Cómo citar: Brenner, L. S. y Everitt, K. (2023). Time for Love. *Res Pública. Revista de Historia de las Ideas Políticas* 26(3), 369-376.

1. Introduction

I know we've only known each other four weeks and three days, but to me it seems like nine weeks and five days. The first day seemed like a week and the second day seemed like five days. And the third day seemed like a week again and the fourth day seemed like eight days. And the fifth day you went to see your mother and that seemed just like a day, and then you came back and later on the sixth day, in the evening, when we saw each other, that started seeming like two days, so in the evening it seemed like two days spilling over into

the next day and that started seeming like four days, so at the end of the sixth day on into the seventh day, it seemed like a total of five days. And the sixth day seemed like a week and a half. I have it written down, but I can show it to you tomorrow if you want to see it³.

In alignment with the monologue delivered by Navin Johnson, portrayed by Steve Martin in the film *The Jerk*, Alain Badiou contends in *In Praise of Love* that "Every-one's existence, when tested by love, confronts a new way of experiencing time"⁴. Badiou articulates that love possesses the remarkable capacity to alter one's percep-

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³ C. Reiner (Director), *The Jerk*, Universal Pictures, 1979.

⁴ A. Badiou and N. Truong, *In Praise Of Love*, London, Profile, 2012, p. 33.

tion of time, making it seem as if it slows down, accelerates, or even reconfigures itself entirely. Consequently, a unique temporal experience seems to emerge with the advent of love.

Badiou's exploration of love finds intermittent presence across his prolific body of work. He particularly delves into developing his philosophy of love in three significant works: "The Scene of the Two"⁵, "What is Love"⁶, and *In Praise of Love*⁷. Recently, a series of scholarly works have endeavored to further develop Badiou's philosophy of love^{8 9 10 11 12 13}. Moreover, a limited number of publications have directly engaged with Badiou's philosophy of time^{14 15 16 17}. However, a comprehensive examination of the temporality of love within the context of Badiou's philosophy is still absent in secondary literature.

In this chapter we posit that love, as interpreted through Badiou's philosophical lens, provides an invaluable perspective for understanding the very creation and transformation of time.

Time is a multifaceted concept that has been pondered, discussed, and theorized about by philosophers across various disciplines for centuries. The Ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus is notably renowned for his doctrine of change, encapsulated in the phrase "*Panta rhei*", which translates to "everything flows". This suggests a temporal flux, where Logos—a cosmic law in Heraclitus's philosophy—governs the progression of time and change. Other philosophers, like Martin Heidegger, saw time as being intimately entwined with human existence and consciousness. In fact, Heidegger urged his contemporaries to revisit the question of time, a call he heeded himself in his metaphysical musings, most significantly in his seminal work *Being and Time*¹⁸. Heidegger held that humans have a unique relationship with time, as we are the only beings that reflect upon our own

existence and inevitable end—a notion encapsulated by the term *being-towards-Death*.

Alain Badiou takes up Heidegger's call for a renewed philosophy of time with his own distinctive interpretation anchored in his unique metaphysics and philosophy of the event. In Badiou's portrayal of time, he emphasizes moments of exceptional intensity that accompany transformative processes, paradigmatic shifts, and revolutionary sequences in cultural history. These pivotal events serve as central structuring nodes in humanity's evolving narrative. Consequently, Badiou's theory of time is intricately interwoven with his theory of the truth procedure and the unfolding of the event, which forces into being a new present in the historical situation.

In his seminal work, *Being and Event*, Badiou posits: "...the theory of intervention forms the kernel of any theory of time. *Time... is intervention itself*, thought as the gap between two events"¹⁹. This assertion foregrounds the intertwined nature of intervention and time in Badiou's philosophy, highlighting the necessity of understanding the former to fully grasp the latter.

In Badiou's lexicon, an *intervention* signifies the inaugural instance in the unfolding of an event. This precedes the event's *naming*, its subsequent *enquiries*, and the enduring *fidelity* to its ramifications. The phrase "time is intervention itself" encapsulates (in a slogan-like manner) the idea that the irruption of these sequences in cultural history constitutes the most salient points in the narrative humanity crafts about its own journey. Intervention and, by extension, time itself, demarcate a chasm between two incommensurable sequences of rupture in human history; they punctuate a difference between two otherwise indifferent truth procedures. Badiou's notion of the "Two" delineates the *non*-relation between these two incommensurable positions and occupies a pivotal role both in his philosophy of time and of love. Consequently, we posit that love provides the best exposition of Badiou's theory of time. As we transition between the sections of this chapter, a concise exposition of Badiou's metaphysics and his theory of truth procedure will be furnished, emphasizing facets that resonate with his philosophy of love. Finally, Badiou's notion of time would be augmented based on our development of the notion of the Two in love.

2. Time Between Worlds is Intervention

By asserting that time is intervention itself, Badiou is not drawing a straightforward equivalence between the two. Instead, he implies a richer, more intricate association, prodding readers to reconsider the notion of time through the lens of his theory of intervention. Therefore, to truly unpack Badiou's conflation of time and intervention, it becomes necessary to delve deep into the lexicon and constructs he presents in his theory of truth procedures, ultimately unveiling the intricate tapestry of ideas he weaves around the relationship of truth and event.

⁵ A. Badiou, "The Scene of the Two", *Lacanian Ink*, 21, 2003.

⁶ A. Badiou, "What is Love", in *Conditions*, London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2008.

⁷ A. Badiou & N. Truong, *In Praise*, *op. cit.*

⁸ J.C. De Chavez, "On Love and Thought's Intimate Connivance", *Eidos*, 26.1, 2017, pp.105-120.

⁹ C. Zeiher, "Struggle as Love Par Excellence: Zupancic avec Badiou", in *Can Philosophy Love?: Reflections and Encounters*, 2017, p. 297.

¹⁰ N.S. Evcan, "Against Instinctual Reason: Alain Badiou on the Disinterested Interest of Truth Procedures in the Post-Truth Era", in *Contemporary Political Theory*, 2021, pp. 1-21.

¹¹ P. Youngjin, "A Lacanian Supplementation to Love in L'Immanence Des Vérités", *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 8(1), 2021, pp. 1-10.

¹² R. Das, "Politics of Love, and Love of Politics", *Class, Race and Corporate Power*, 10(2), 2022, pp. 30-45.

¹³ P. Shmugliakov, "The Evental Conception of Love", *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 2023.

¹⁴ C.P. Holland, *Time for Paul: Lyotard, Agamben, Badiou*, Atlanta, Emory University, 2004.

¹⁵ A. Calcagno, "Jacques Derrida and Alain Badiou: Is There a Relation between Politics and Time?", *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, 30(7), 2004, pp. 799-815.

¹⁶ A. Calcagno, *Badiou and Derrida: Politics, Events and Their Time*, London, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2007.

¹⁷ M. De Kesel, "The Time of Truth", *Bijdragen*, 70(2), 2009, pp. 207-35.

¹⁸ M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Eastford, Martino Fine Books, 2019.

¹⁹ A. Badiou, *Being and Event*, London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2005, p. 210. Emphasis added.

Badiou offers a distinctive understanding of truth, which is crucial to comprehend before we delve into the mechanics of the truth procedure. First, Badiou sharply distinguishes between knowledge and truth²⁰. For Badiou, knowledge refers to an object articulated in a concept or an assembly of concepts²¹. However, truth transcends the coherence of various discourses or the opinions of individuals as it draws its power from its universality and its capacity to propel historical events that deploy its consequences in localized points within the world. In other words, truth is not knowledge, but constitutes the basis of procedures that puncture knowledge, allowing for the emergence of the new paradigms of knowledge.

Truth procedures operate on four separate levels, which Badiou calls *conditions*, that shape the history of human beings²². These conditions are politics, art, science, and love²³. Under these conditions, truth comes into existence through the occurrence of the event and underpins the sequential truth procedure initiated by it. Each of these conditions demonstrates truth in a distinct way. And here, we will focus on love, because love, according to Badiou, “makes a truth from difference as such” –and difference is the business of time²⁴.

The inaugural stage in a truth procedure, according to Badiou, is the *intervention*. It acts as a disruptive force within the world, catalyzing the unveiling of the event’s truth within it²⁵. Badiou characterizes the world we occupy as a multiplicity encompassing other multiplicities, which he dubs the “state of the situation”²⁶ or the “historical situation”²⁷. In his view, everything that exists – all that is presented in the world– is part of the situation or is counted as one of the elements or multiplicities determined within it²⁸. Conversely, this implies that “there is nothing apart from situations”, nothing that exists beyond it²⁹. Therefore, every multiplicity presented in the situation is counted and defined according to what Badiou calls the *encyclopedia of the situation*: an index that reinforces the superstructure of the situation, ensures its continuity, and prevents its chaotic disintegration³⁰. The intervention breaks the status quo of the situation, paving the way for the emergence and acknowledgment of new truths that are initially perceived as being illegal within it³¹. In Badiou’s philosophical framework, the intervention is an unprecedented occurrence, prompting a process that destabilizes the prevailing structure and brings forth the potential for radical novelty within the historical situation³². Crucially, the intervention commences a trajectory that situates an event in a specific

site within the situation. This process reveals elements that, until that moment, had been uncounted and indiscernible in the narrative of human history³³.

Badiou often cites the storming of the Bastille, the fall of the monarchy, or the rise of the Jacobins as examples for an intervention accompanied by the decision to recognize these moments as political events. Further, Spartacus and other gladiators escaping from the gladiatorial training school in Capua in 73 BCE, then gathering a large number of slaves and building a formidable rebel force can also be viewed as an intervention. Spartacus’ decision, along with his fellow leaders, to not just seek freedom for themselves but to challenge the Roman system of slavery signifies a rupture in the state of the situation at the time of Roman society. In the realm of love, Badiou views the intervention as the unexpected and surprising “encounter” between two incommensurable experiences of the world³⁴. This encounter does not fit neatly into the established order of things; it does not make immediate sense in the linear progression of one’s life. Phrases such as “I was just going to get some gas when we met”, “He wasn’t even paying attention to me”, or “It was a one in a million chance”, often characterizes the contingent nature of these initial encounters. Yet, it’s important to emphasize that, for Badiou, the lovers’ encounter qualifies as an intervention to the extent that it remains opaque from the perspective of their individual experience. It is ignited by a *decentering* of one’s life, a moment when the self no longer occupies the central stage³⁵.

For an intervention to transition from its transient state into the material construction of its truth presented within the situation, it must first be *named*³⁶. In the domain of politics, Badiou cites the declaration of a new era of proletarian rule, the end of the Provisional Government, and the beginning of Soviet power accompanying the Bolshevik seizure of power in Russia in 1917 as examples of nomination. He also mentions the rallying calls and slogans such as “All power to the imagination!” and “It is forbidden to forbid!” as further forms of nomination that the protesters of May 68 utilized. In the realm of love, the naming of the event manifests as the declaration of love³⁷. Love is declared when something must be verbalized about what transpired during the encounter: “I love you”³⁸. This declaration, as Badiou asserts, extracts more than contingency from the encounter. It involves extracting something that possesses the capacity to endure and be liberated from its transience³⁹.

Naming happens when what is undecidable and indiscernible from the vantage point of the situation is recognized and integrated into it. Hence, naming is both an act of recognition but also displacement. This is because in the very presentation of the intervention in the situation, what was unrepresentable, is made presentable. Thus, we reach the central paradox: naming the inter-

²⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 513, 523.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 526.

²² A. Badiou, *Conditions*, London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2008, p. 23.

²³ A. Badiou, *Being and Event*, *op. cit.*, pp. 340-341.

²⁴ A. Badiou, “L’immanence des vérités: Séminaire d’Alain Badiou (2012-2013)” (Notes by Daniel Fischer), *Entretemps*, 25 Jun. 2013b, <https://chat.openai.com/c/ce797e6b-4402-4da3-8191-027645853203>.

²⁵ A. Badiou, *Being and Event*, *op. cit.*, pp. 344-355.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 104.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 173-177.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 52, 504, 522.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 25.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 93, 109, 506.

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 201.

³² *Ibidem*, pp. 177, 209.

³³ *Ibidem*, pp. 205-206.

³⁴ A. Badiou, *In Praise*, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-29.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 25.

³⁶ A. Badiou, *Being and Event*, *op. cit.*, pp. 203-204.

³⁷ A. Badiou, *In Praise*, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 43.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 45.

vention *splits* the intervention into itself and the event. The event emerges attached to its new name, but we are still left with a trace of the rupturing intervention. The name, therefore, can never refer back to the intervention itself—or else the intervention would not truly be indiscernible.

Hence, naming introduces a splitting, or a difference, within the identity of the event itself⁴⁰. To put it more simply, the event refers to the intervention—to that which was unrepresentable but nonetheless presentable—and to itself. Hence, the event itself is split along these lines of presentability and unrepresentability—of radical difference.

Take the example of a couple before they have fallen in love. They are simply two people—completely indifferent to each other. The radical point that Badiou makes about falling in love is not that the couple comes together because they find they have so much in common, they fall in love based on the unique *difference* between them. “He’s German and I’m French”. “Her family is big and my family is small”. “He stays up all night, and I get to bed early”. Badiou refers to the story of Romeo and Juliet as the clearest demonstration of this concept, with the two characters stemming from opposing factions. Love cuts diagonally across the strongest dichotomies, triggering a process fundamentally rooted in the world’s reconstruction, with profound consequences, as Shakespeare marks in his play. Big differences and little differences are, in fact, the stuff of love. Love is a unique truth procedure in that it is the truth created from difference-as-such. This is true dialectics: a difference emerges between the two terms, not as a third term, but as difference-as-such. The “Two” (capitalized) is a concept Badiou uses to denote the construction of the world through the prism of difference-as-such as it is expressed in love⁴¹. It is in the construction of the world from the vantage point of the Two that time emerges in its unique amorous dimension.

A crucial point that Badiou makes in his theory of intervention and naming is that an event, which contains its own self-difference, requires references to *other* events. Just like a signifier cannot exist in isolation, but instead must exist in a chain of signification, a named event requires reference to other events⁴². Badiou writes: “In order to avoid this curious mirroring of the event and the intervention—of the fact and the interpretation—the possibility of the intervention must be assigned to the consequences of another event”⁴³. Events become domesticated in the sense that their founding interventions are seen as consequences of previous events. The October Revolution was a continuation of the French Revolution, in the same way the invention of quantum physics is conditioned by the atomistic theory of Leucippus and Democritus. Hence, Badiou writes, an intervention “is an evental between two”⁴⁴.

This has direct repercussions on Badiou’s theory of time. Like intervention, time ruptures. As soon as the event is named, it opens up a connection between a chain of events. This sequence of interventions can be viewed as a temporal chain, composed of the “event’s immanent time-lag”⁴⁵. Because each event requires reference to other events, a temporal lag occurs insofar as an event’s precise significance is always deferred up to the point of reference to other events. For example, the October Revolution relates itself to the Paris Commune, and time is substantialized as the gap between these two events. However, it is not only that time emerges insofar as Lenin’s accomplishment falls sequentially 47 years *after* the Paris Commune, but it is that the two events are referentially *bound* together, separated by a gap in time. Let us remember that Lenin danced in the snow on the 73rd day of the newly instituted Soviet regime, because it had at that point lasted a whole day longer than the Paris Commune. This shows that the Soviet government saw itself as a continuation of the Paris Commune in terms of its significance to emancipatory movements. As Badiou writes: “Time is here, again, the requirement of the Two: for there to be an event, one must be able to situate oneself within the consequences of another”⁴⁶. Like Lenin’s dance, this line drawn between two events is diagonally connecting two disparate worlds. The relationality between events introduces their temporal disjunction in the sense that time itself demarcates them. Going back to the notion of the Two, it marks how difference is, in fact, time. Namely, time is itself the difference between two events that previously were merely indifferent.

3. Time Within a World is Duration

While we have revealed how time emerges *between* worlds, we can likewise understand how time is built *within* a world. Recall that the intervention and naming of the event lend a precarious existence to the event within the situation. This precariousness prompts the elements within the situation to address the event’s existence; to choose a side—either for or against the truth of the event and its subsequent consequences. Badiou labels this phase within the truth procedure as *enquiry*, a stage during which each element within the situation determines its position relative to the novel truth of the event. Importantly, the enquiry of the event is not a conceptual or intellectual exercise. Instead, it necessitates an act—that is, a positioning in relation to the event’s truth that remains undecidable from the perspective of its veridicality. It involves an ethical stance that culminates in either fervent commitment or indifference and resistance to the event⁴⁷.

In Badiou’s framework, the enquiry of the event is an unending process, with each element within the situation identifying itself as either being influenced by (+)

⁴⁰ A. Badiou, *Being and Event*, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

⁴¹ A. Badiou, *In Praise*, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

⁴² A. Badiou, *Being and Event*, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 206.

⁴⁴ *Idem*.

⁴⁵ J. Barker, *Alain Badiou : a critical introduction*, London, Pluto Press, 2002, p. 6.

⁴⁶ A. Badiou, *Being and Event*, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 329-331.

or opposed to (-) the event's truth. Each enquiry forms a *point* in the ongoing sequence of enquiries triggered by the naming and intervention of the event within the situation. According to Badiou, a point signifies a localized instance where an event establishes itself. This point represents a juncture at which the truth procedure compels the subject to make a radical act, akin to the initial choice of the encounter, where the event's declaration must either be taken up by the subject or renounced⁴⁸. The culmination of these *pointillistic* enquiries is an infinite series within the situation, affirming each point's alignment with the event (+++, ++, ++...)⁴⁹. This infinite series manifests as a multiplicity that presents the event's truth within the situation. As Badiou posits, "A truth groups together all the terms of the situation which are positively connected to the event"⁵⁰.

In the context of love, enquiries entails what Badiou terms as the "labor of love", during which the world is sequentially re-invented in relation to the truth of the encounter⁵¹. In this labor, the space delineated by love is constructed point-by-point⁵². The labor of love consists of points, joints, and divergences that compel the subject to re-articulate the terms of the love declaration –to restate it⁵³. Badiou provides examples of such points as instances of sexual invention, children, work, friends, nights out, holidays, and more⁵⁴. This iterative process is how the eternity of the love declaration is accommodated within time⁵⁵. Consequently, for Badiou, love represents a "commitment within time" to the sequential enquiry of eternity⁵⁶.

Regardless of the number of enquiries that establish the truth of an event within a given situation, this position is not guaranteed in perpetuity. Badiou argues that an additional stage in the truth procedure is necessary to maintain the ongoing series of enquiries. This additional stage is what Badiou refers to as *fidelity*⁵⁷. Due to the infinite nature of the situation, fidelity becomes an endless process wherein individuals, who are elements within the situation, commit themselves to the consequences of the event, thus extending the effect of truth across various aspects of the situation⁵⁸. Badiou explains that "to be faithful to an event is to move within the situation that this event has supplemented, by thinking... the situation 'according to' the event"⁵⁹. This notion of fidelity does not imply a mere psychological agreement of a thinking individual, but rather an active and *militant* action undertaken by the elements participating in a me-

ticulous procedure aimed at validating the truth of the event within the situation⁶⁰.

While Badiou views time as a sequence of disjunctions between singular events within the historical situation, one might also argue that there is a specific *duration* intrinsic to the unfolding of a single event. This duration spans from the inaugural intervention, through its naming, and the perpetual fidelity to the event's implications. Badiou's notion of the fidelity to the event sustains this duration, marked by numerous affirmative enquiries as the event unfolds within a situation. Taking the French Revolution as an example, the sequence began with the storming of the Bastille, followed by the subsequent executions and culminating in the Reign of Terror⁶¹. Such a sequence demarcates the distinctive temporal nature of the French Revolution within the situation. Thus, we might say that fidelity relates to the event's *temporal immanence*, signifying the unique evolution of an event's time within the world⁶². Such a time is irreducible and cannot be equated with times of other truth procedures initiated by different interventions⁶³.

Badiou comments that most love stories spare us the lion's share of the labor of love⁶⁴. They say, "and they lived happily ever after" and leave it at that. Badiou's philosophy of love focuses on the *duration of love*, on the different ways love endures in life⁶⁵. In love, the couple may make enquiries in a variety of ways that affirm their event. One person may move across the country in order to live with their partner, demonstrating an affirmation of their fidelity to the couple as subject. A couple may have a child together, creating a new point in their world and a new affirmation of their love, a testimony to the endurance of love⁶⁶. Love entails, moreover, daily labor, where the world is re-invented, piece by piece, in relation to the fidelity to the event⁶⁷. This is how the eternity of the declaration of love is accommodated within time, how love becomes "a commitment within time" to the construction of eternity⁶⁸.

It is the duration of an event that testifies to its truth and, accordingly, love is "coextensive with its duration"⁶⁹. Love endures precisely because it is centered around the *difference* between a couple. Therefore, we could call this difference a *productive antagonism* – the creative tension which propels the couple forward. Hence, *difference itself* emerges as the duration of love, because it is the stake that affirmations, enquiries, points, are referencing. There is no way love could be static –it must constantly propel itself forward by making productive enquiries and strengthening the caliber of the event in its particular duration.

Unlike the diagonal of time that stretches *between* worlds, *fideli*tous enquiries constitute the duration that

⁴⁸ A. Badiou, *In Praise*, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

⁴⁹ A. Badiou, *Being and Event*, *op. cit.*, pp. 336-337.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 345.

⁵¹ A. Badiou, *In Praise*, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

⁵² *Ibidem*, p. 55.

⁵³ *Ibidem*, p. 51.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 55.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 47.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 48, 80.

⁵⁷ A. Badiou, *Being and Event*, *op. cit.*, pp. 232-239, 330, 507-508.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 232.

⁵⁹ A. Badiou, "Infinitesimal Subversion", in *Concept and Form Volume II: Interviews and Essays on "Cahiers Pour l'Analyse"*, Brooklyn, Verso, 2013, p. 38.

⁶⁰ A. Badiou, *Being and Event*, *op. cit.*, p. 329.

⁶¹ A. Calcagno, *Badiou and Derrida*, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

⁶² A. Calcagno, "Jacques Derrida and Alain Badiou", *op. cit.*, p. 809.

⁶³ A. Calcagno, *Badiou and Derrida*, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

⁶⁴ A. Badiou, *In Praise*, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 33.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 50.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 46.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 47-48, 80.

⁶⁹ A. Badiou, *The Immanence of Truths: Being and Event III*, London, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022, p. 553.

maps the points *within* a world. To the former, time emerges as soon as an intervention is named as an event; time is itself this difference that emerges between the indifferent Two. As for the latter, duration is continuously constructed. In other words, enquiries strengthen the event, refer back to its inauguration, and retroactively make the event “what it will have been”, i.e. what it was always meant to be⁷⁰. Thus, while time emerges between worlds as soon as an event is affirmed, its duration is constantly built point-by-point in a way that strengthens the cogency of the event within a world.

4. Time is Difference-As-Such

Badiou’s philosophy of love provides an in-depth exploration of his theory of disjunction, which is not included in his explicit elaborations of time. In the last section of this chapter, we will employ Badiou’s concept of disjunction to refine our understanding of his concept of time. In doing so, we will add complexity to our grasp of temporality in Badiou’s philosophy by formulating time as being atomic and not constituting a whole.

Recall that in Badiou’s framework, love is predicated on the radical distinction between two positions. This distinction, referred to as *disjunction* in several of his publications^{71 72 73}, uniquely distinguishes the two irreducible and singular positions –succinctly captured in the term the Two. Badiou underscores that love as a truth procedure is an experience wherein truth derived from disjunction as such is materialized in the world⁷⁴. This process entails a pursuit of the truth of the Two, specifically, “what kind of world does one perceive when one experiences it from the viewpoint of two and not one?... from the perspective of difference and not identity?”⁷⁵. Consequently, love evolves into a “positive, creative, affirmative experience of difference”⁷⁶.

Badiou regards disjunction as a signifier of radical difference. When articulating this idea, he underscores several additional aspects characterizing disjunction that we have yet to discuss.

Badiou begins by positing that disjunction permits the existence of only two positions in the experience of love⁷⁷. These positions, termed as masculine and feminine, are inspired by Jacques Lacan’s psychoanalytic understanding of the sexuated positions⁷⁸. It is important to clarify that the distinction between these positions does not stem from empirical, biological, or sociocultural determinants. Rather, it signifies a structural disparity predicated on the assumption of two incommensurable *logical* positions, which are manifested through the operation of love. Ba-

diou argues that for love to move beyond the realm of narcissistic infatuation, it must be built on the foundation of difference, not sameness. Consequently, Badiou maintains that disjunction expresses the fact that love can only be experienced through the recognition of a profound difference in relation to another.

Badiou further contends that the masculine and feminine positions are not merely distinct; they are *radically disjunct*⁷⁹. Formally, this signifies that group M (encompassing all elements classified under the masculine position) and group W (encompassing all elements classified under the feminine position) share no overlap or intersection. That is, no element in M belongs to W, and no element in W belongs to M –their intersection equates to zero.

Analogously, within the context of Badiou’s historical situation, we could assert that any element under the purview of knowledge cannot provide insights about the feminine position from the masculine position and vice versa. As Badiou articulates: “everything is presented in such a way that no coincidence can be attested between what affects one position and what affects the other”⁸⁰. This emphasizes the radical disjunction and non-relation between the two positions.

Badiou examines the argument that disjunction necessitates the acceptance of a third position to delineate the non-relation between the Two. In contrast, he contends that there is no third position that emerges between the Two, but that it is difference-as-such around which love is oriented⁸¹. In this context, Badiou posits that within love, only two incommensurable positions exist, and no other. This thesis partially originates from the initial two premises. These impel us to consider a disjunction between two entirely singular positions –namely, their intersection is zero. Accordingly, Badiou maintains that the idea of disjunction as a third position contradicts the initial two postulates and falls within the realm of fantasy⁸².

Establishing the homology between time, intervention, and disjunction now allows us to surmise that time operates as a disjunction between two unique positions (events), without in itself constituting a third position. However, this begs the question, what is the nature of time when conceptualized in this manner? What is time if it is not counted as one within the situation? To delve into these inquiries, let’s examine Badiou’s additional arguments about disjunction as presented in his paper “The Scene of the Two”⁸³, where he elucidates three theses regarding the consistency of disjunction.

Badiou begins by asserting that he does not view disjunction as being *integral* –in other words, as an operator indicating the *nonexistence* of a common element between the masculine and feminine positions⁸⁴. This interpretation of disjunction, he argues, is insufficient as it fails to imbue disjunction with any tangible form of existence. If the set demarcating disjunction is considered an empty

⁷⁰ F. Ruda, *For Badiou: Idealism Without Idealism*, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 2015, p. 69.

⁷¹ A. Badiou, “The Scene of the Two”, *op. cit.*

⁷² A. Badiou, “What is Love”, *op. cit.*

⁷³ A. Badiou, *In Praise*, *op. cit.*

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 38.

⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 22.

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 66.

⁷⁷ A. Badiou, “What is Love”, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

⁷⁸ J. Lacan, *On Feminine Sexuality the Limits of Love and Knowledge: The Seminar Of Jacques Lacan Book XX: Encore*, London, WW Norton, 1999.

⁷⁹ A. Badiou, “What is Love”, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

⁸⁰ *Idem*.

⁸¹ *Idem*.

⁸² A. Badiou, “What is Love”, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

⁸³ A. Badiou, “The Scene of the Two”, *op. cit.*

⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 5.

multiplicity, it inevitably descends into the realm of the imaginary⁸⁵. To affirm disjunction as real, Badiou argues, we must posit the existence of at least one non-empty element inscribed in the locus of disjunction –the space that marks the non-relation between the two sexual positions. Badiou labels this minimal element as “u”. This notation signifies that at least one element “u” exists which is associated with both W and M.

Questioning the nature of “u”, Badiou draws from his previous elucidation of disjunction to argue that “u” cannot comprise a multiplicity that expresses the non-relation in a form of knowledge⁸⁶. Such a plurality, after all, represents a third position from which the two positions can be counted as Two. Thus, Badiou emphasizes that “u” is not a fixed element; instead, it must be conceived as indeterminate, indefinable, and uncomposable –in essence, *atomic*– representing a singular, irreducible unit within a larger system. Therefore, Badiou argues, “u” cannot be composed of anything, nor can it be analytically described⁸⁷. We can infer from this that ‘u’ introduces a sort of local void within the two positions and can only interact with this void. This proposition posits that if ‘u’ is related to the masculine position (M) and the feminine position (W), then if it is related to any other element – designated here as “t”– this element must be empty. In other words, as an atomic or indeterminate unit, ‘u’ can only have a relationship with the void.

Finally, Badiou notes that although the two positions are disjunctive, they are not complementary. Complementarity would imply that although the masculine and feminine positions do not share a direct relationship, an intermediary relationship exists between them that suggests the possibility of union, a shared destiny to become a whole, or One⁸⁸. Complementarity presumes that there is no element that avoids inscription under either of the positions, meaning all elements are decidable, discernible, and composable within the purview of the two positions. According to Badiou, such a notion of Oneness undermines the concept of non-relation, neglecting the division into two positions and the concept of disjunction in general⁸⁹. Consequently, Badiou proposes we must posit that there exists at least one element ‘t’ that is not associated with either the masculine or the feminine positions. Therefore, the union of the two positions does not constitute a whole or One.

As we have already noted, Badiou associates time with the intervention that ruptures the situation. The intervention is named as an event, introducing a difference between two singular events. The event is affirmed point-by-point through its enquiries, strengthening the event’s duration and fortifying it through the fidelity to its consequences.

The aforementioned elaborations by Badiou further illuminate his concept of time. Drawing from the homology between time and disjunction, we can now assert the following. We now see, through Badiou’s account of disjunction, that time is not by itself a third position where

the difference between two events is recorded. Time is difference-as-such that emerges from the intervention split into event. In this sense, time is not history itself, it is the punctuation of the history of rupture.

Further, we acknowledge that time is not void in Badiou’s philosophy. However, it does not bear an ontological nature, because it does not present itself in the situation. Instead, it is fundamentally *atomic*. Like a point, it is defined by its indeterminacy, indefinability, uncomposability, and its relationship with the void. Time is thus conceived of as an indivisible building block of the world. Like atoms, it moves through the void and intersects in various ways to form the events that shape the world. Contrary to the conventional view of time as continuous, flowing, and capable of being broken down to smaller and smaller pieces, Badiou’s notion of time contains no smaller or simpler constituent parts. In this sense, time is composed of discrete, indivisible units or *quanta*. If time is quantized, it does not flow continuously but rather “jumps” from one quantum to the next. This conception follows Badiou’s preference of “number, discreteness, space, and affirmation: or, better, Mark, Punctuation, Blank Space, and Cause” over “quality, continuity, temporality and negation” in his theory of time⁹⁰. With atomic time, the idea of historical causality might need to be redefined, further it poses challenges to philosophical understandings of perception, consciousness, and ethics. Further investigation would require reconciling the discreteness of time put forth by Badiou and the “jumps” between points: is there a dialectic at play between continuity and atomism, or can we come down firmly on an atomistic interpretation of time? These notions have not been previously developed by scholars of Badiou and provide a fertile ground for further developing his concept of time.

Finally, time in Badiou’s conceptualization does not presume unity or Oneness. If time does not have a unified or absolute existence, it might not have a beginning or an end or even a coherent structure that can be universally defined. It could exist in fragments or localized contexts without forming a seamless whole. This implies a lack of a universal “clock” governing the entire universe. Time lacking wholeness can behave differently in different contexts or locations, and its nature might vary across different scales or dimensions. This non-totalizing view on time could be seen as a rejection of a predetermined course of humanity, emphasizing instead the complexity, ambiguity, and multiplicity of reality and destiny. This in turn affects how we understand the role of temporality in matters pertaining to personal responsibility, social mobilization, and ethical decisions. It necessarily involves an opening towards a point unassigned to either of the events distinguished in time. This reveals Badiou’s philosophy of time as non-messianic in essence, eschewing the notion of the end of time.

In sum, Badiou’s elaboration of disjunction sheds new light on his conception of time and offers implications that deeply influence both philosophy and metaphysics. Among many, it challenges conventional understandings of causality, ethics, existence, and reality, while also opening up new avenues for thought and inquiry.

⁸⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 4.

⁸⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 5.

⁸⁷ *Idem*.

⁸⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 6.

⁸⁹ *Idem*.

⁹⁰ A. Badiou, “Infinitesimal Subversion”, *op. cit.*, p. 294.

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